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20 November 1981

file in file/DDI

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, Office of Policy and Planning

FROM : Chief, Planning Staff, OPP

SUBJECT : Centralization of CIA Television Production Activities

1. You had requested that we look into the suggestion, contained in the attached anonymous letter, that the Agency centralize the management of its television production facilities. [redacted] looked into this 25X1 and came to certain conclusions and recommendations. This study is certainly not a definitive examination of this topic. More detailed analysis such as suggested in paragraph seven should be conducted before a final decision is reached.

2. The use of television techniques and equipment in CIA has been a topic of considerable senior management attention. In 1977, the DDCI initiated a study of the subject. This study concluded that:

- CIA should have a professionally staffed center, primarily for the production of finished intelligence.
- the small specialized TV units in the Office of Training and Office of Communications should continue to function in a decentralized role.
- the Presentational Means Steering Group (PMSG) should undertake a detailed study to establish a more comprehensive set of goals for the future use and management of TV in CIA.

NOTE: The PMSG was formed informally about 1975, and was given formal status (by Headquarters Notice 1-146) in 1979. That charter expired in 1980. It was established with Agency-wide representation, chaired by a senior NFAC officer, to review and advise senior management on the use and development of Agency wide television activities.

Of the three findings noted above, only the first two have come to fruition. We can find no record of PMSG review or report to senior management.

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3. In 1979, the DCI approved a recommendation in the Inspector General's survey of the Office of Training calling for an updated Agency-wide study of existing and planned television production facilities, with a view to ensuring maximum economy and effectiveness, and avoidance of duplication. The PMSG was charged with conducting this study. They developed and circulated a questionnaire to all Agency offices. The PMSG leadership was then reassigned and the study was not completed. The completed questionnaires are available in NFAC and provide substantial information on facilities, equipment, etc. as of 1979.

4. In January 1981, NFAC conducted a review of the use and management of TV and for intelligence production support purposes and concluded that:

- TV is a valuable medium for the presentation of intelligence and related tutorials if it is used selectively.
- teleproduction resources must be protected in the NFAC program at realistic costs.
- NFAC should not continue to bear the resource burden of providing services to other Agency components.

As a result of this study, NFAC for the first time has included specific resources for its TV center in the 1983 program request. These resources were formerly pieced together from other NFAC components.

5. CIA's current uses for television are quite diverse. Several Agency facilities have TV equipment. This equipment ranges from relatively simple record/playback units to complete studios. There is widespread use of camera/recorder/playback units where students give presentations or conduct role-playing exercises. Some examples of CIA TV facilities and their uses are:

NFAC has a headquarters studio for producing finished intelligence and tutorials.

OTE has a studio [redacted] for making training films, mostly in support of the DDO, from activities conducted there.

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OC has a studio which supports resident students at the [redacted] self-study programs for OC personnel, and OC-wide information dissemination.

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DDO [redacted]

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DDS&T maintains some equipment which is used for signal analysis and classroom training. The FBIS has a capability for recording and playback of foreign TV broadcasts [redacted]

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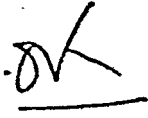

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6. Based on current applications and a review of the previous studies it seems, that without a substantial change in policy on how CIA uses TV, that:

- Centralization of the management and facilities for TV productions in CIA is not likely to be operationally effective. Our current applications of TV are too diverse, the equipment is needed at a number of widely separated facilities, and is needed in conjunction with equipment or activities that cannot be moved (the communications training, for example). In addition, most of the DDO's use of TV is too sensitive to integrate with other CIA activities and the FBIS's foreign TV equipment is not generally compatible for use with other Agency TV systems. It is not apparent that any major economic benefits would accrue from merging the three major studio-type efforts in NFAC, OTE, and OC. Historically, savings from such mergers have been elusive as was the case when DIV/D and OEL were merged into OSO.
- It might be possible to merge only the supporting electronic segments of the three major studios (tape editing facilities, etc). This would retain operational flexibility and possibly reduce inventory, maintenance, and other costs.
- Potential benefits might also accrue from developing a more coordinated approach to the acquisition of some equipment, producing an Agency-wide inventory of such equipment, and having a more coordinated approach to maintenance (in-house and/or vendor). Commonality of equipment, and the availability to all users of an equipment list would aid in providing spares for units in repair, meeting surge workloads, etc. Such an inventory does not presently exist.

7. These conclusions are by no means definitive. However, they do suggest several possible avenues of further study and action:

- Continue the Agency's TV operations as they are conducted today. This would recognize the operational problems of merger. 
- Ask the Comptroller to study the economics of merger versus continued operation of the three separate studio activities in NFAC, OTE, O/C. (The Comptroller believes that this might be a candidate for the cost reduction program)
- Ask the Comptroller to study the economics of merging only the technical electronic positions of the studios, that is, the editing function, etc. This would leave the "sets" and cameras in place at remote facilities.
- Ask the DDA to develop a plan for coordinated equipment procurement, inventory, and maintenance of TV equipment. Such a plan should exclude sensitive DDO activities and FBIS use of foreign TV equipment. 

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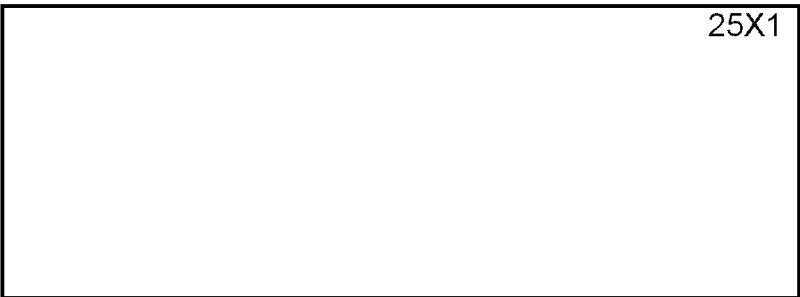
- Reestablish the PMSG, or a new group, to study and develop options for EXCOM consideration covering:

- o policy on TV uses within CIA
- o consolidation of facilities
- o coordination of equipment procurement, use, and maintenance



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Attachment:
as stated



SUBJECT: Centralization of Video Production Resources

(new building)

The attached article from the Friday, 2 October Washington Post prompts me to drop you this note concerning the consolidation of Agency video tape facilities and a place to put them. I would very much appreciate your handling this correspondence with as much confidentiality as possible so that I am not perceived as having made an end-run around some very fine people.

As the interest in utilizing video tape as a training tool increases, more and more components within the Agency vie for the monies to create their own facilities. Video systems and support staffs require rather large amounts of initial expenditure, particularly since those involved in the creation of these fiefdoms usually suffer from the "more is better" syndrome. We have a tendency to keep throwing money at it in an effort to make it bigger and, therefore, better. Like advertising, video facilities are among the least understood of the big budget items.

I propose that we create an office to centralize authority over the various video facilities within the Agency's purview. By this creation we will have at once drawn competing identities together as one unit yet retaining their individuality, and we will have a measure of control over system duplication.

Moreover, since the bulk of video effort is in the area of training and briefing, and video technology now facilitates the user's efforts at more desirable in-the-field production, we needn't expend large amounts of money on a "broadcast quality" in-house studio production facility. Electronic Field Production technology now allows us to take the target audience to the subject rather than recreate the subject in the studio - a process much akin to putting a ship in a bottle. Thus, we utilize our monetary resources more efficiently on editing systems and less expensive portable video equipment. In addition, the staffing requirements are greatly reduced in that the same Producer who initiates the project performs the Scriptwriter function, Directs the tape segments, and edits the final pieces together with the client who performs as content expert throughout. On-location crew requirements are kept to a minimum because the EFP video equipment allows for a greater range of functions to be performed by a minimum number of people. Not to mention that EFP equipment is at once portable and adaptable to in-house studio use.

For optimum performance, fixed video systems require much the same environment as computer systems. That is, video tape recorders and editing systems used for the purpose of creating a master tape from the segments shot in the field react adversely to conditions of high temperature and humidity. Dust is another factor that can ruin a tape that may have required many man hours to assemble and, once damaged, may double the expenditure required for the gathering of that

material. Moreover, an environment much the same as that required for the storage of magnetic computer tape is required for the storage of video tape. Therefore, in addition to the creation of a centralized authority, I propose that this central authority and attendant video facility be housed in the new building presently proposed for construction on the Langley grounds.

In addition; given that the bulk of video production is concerned with training and briefing, I should like to propose that the Office of Training and Education (or some related portion thereof) be located in this facility as well as the briefing production portion of the NFAC facility presently located in the Headquarters building. In this manner, we bring together the two strongest units of production serving the widest audience requirements. Of necessity, some outlying units would retain their autonomy and physical plant locations though their ultimate purchasing and staffing requirements would be handled through the central office of video production. A central video tape library and duplication facility would also be located in this building due to its superior environmental qualities and resistance to tempest hazards. Security of stored materials is another factor.

I hope that it is not already too late to consider this proposal in light of architectural planning and over-all budgeting. I firmly believe that, on the face of it, this idea has considerable merit and needs only polishing and minor tinkering to bring to the Agency a training and briefing facility that we can point to with great pride. I am not alone in this thinking - over my short association with Central Intelligence I have heard others express similar thoughts, though at this writing I am not aware of anyone having acted accordingly.

I am at your disposal for further discussion or correspondence.